



MONTANA WETLAND NEWS

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News Bits about Montana's Wetlands – To submit your news item, please e-mail lsaul@mt.gov

Wetland Job Opening

DEQ will soon be recruiting for a Wetlands Environmental Science Specialist. Please go to [job posting](#) next week to see the position details and application information. The purpose of this position is to support the state Wetland Program by implementing three of the strategic directions from [Montana's Strategic Framework](#).

Montana Wetland Council

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 22, 2008 in Helena. Please send agenda items to lsaul@mt.gov

Wetland Program Development Grants Awarded

EPA Region 8 awarded 10 project sponsors nearly \$1.5 million for state, tribal and local government wetland program development grants for 2008. See [new project listing](#).

Wetland Restoration

On July 25th, PPL Montana, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and other Legacy partners completed Phase IV of the O'Dell Creek Headwaters wetland restoration. Grangers Ranches, LLC donated a conservation easement to FWP to protect 225 acres surrounding the restoration area which includes an approximately 17-acre wetland mitigation project. Site visits will be scheduled late this summer or early fall. Contact the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership at thinz@mt.gov

Stream Vegetative Buffers: What Does the Science Say?

Montana Audubon (July 2008) completed three new publications to compile the scientific literature on the need for vegetative buffers. In summary: To protect water quality, streams should have vegetative buffers of at least 100 feet. For fisheries protection, at least 100 feet - and many times 300 feet - is recommended. In order to protect wildlife and habitat, vegetated buffers need to expand to at least 300 feet.

Part I: Scientific Recommendations on the Size of Stream Vegetative Buffers Needed to [Protect Water Quality](#).

Part II: Scientific Recommendations of the Stream Vegetative Buffer Size Needed to [Protect Fish and Aquatic Habitat](#).

Part III: Scientific Recommendations on the Size of Stream Vegetative Buffers Needed to [Protect Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat](#).

"...three new riparian reports ... absolutely first-rate, and should be of great value not only in Montana but throughout the country" Headwaters Policy/Planning Partnership, LLP Helena MT.

MT Natural Heritage Program Announces

New Wetland Ecologist, Karen Newlon, is working with Senior Ecologist Linda Vance to establish a wetland reference network in Eastern and Central Montana. [More...](#)

Madison Valley project to identify potential trumpeter swan and northern yellow-legged frog reintroduction sites. [More...](#)

Wetland and Riparian mapping: Yellowstone River, Rocky Boys Reservation, Colstrip area, Southwestern and Southeastern Montana, and Flathead Valley. [More...](#)

For information on any of these projects, please contact Linda Vance at (406)444-3380.

New Publications

"[A Guide to Montana Water Quality Regulation](#)" (2008) by Legislative Environmental Policy Office/Environmental Quality Council Publications.

The "Landowners Guide to Montana Wetlands" and a "Landowners' Guide to Eastern Montana Wetlands and Grasslands" are at the printers. Contact Montana Watercourse (406) 994-6671 or lsaul@mt.gov for a copy of the new guide. Please see the [Governor's letter](#) to landowners stating: "Wetlands are an integral part of a clean water supply, whether through flood control, water purification and retention, or for wildlife habitat or recreation. Montana has committed to cleaning up the mistakes of the past; having witnessed that restoring and protecting healthy wetlands and riparian areas enhance our lives and our economy."

"A Planning Guide for Protecting Montana's Wetlands and Riparian Areas" was reprinted (June 2008) with several updates. Thanks to printing support from the Department of Commerce Community Technical Assistance Program. To receive a copy contact Montana Audubon (406) 443-3949 or lsaul@gmail.com.

Conservation Reserve Program

US Department of Agriculture's CRP has been in the news lately. The USDA just announced that there will be [no early penalty release of CRP lands](#).

Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Guidance Letter

Approved jurisdictional determinations (JDs) and preliminary JDs are tools used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to help implement Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Sections 9 and 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA). This [Regulatory Guidance Letter](#) (RGL) explains the differences between these two types of JDs and provides guidance on when an approved JD is required and when a landowner, permit applicant, or other "affected party" can decline to request and obtain an approved JD and elect to use a preliminary JD instead. Here is a national law firm's [summary of the RGL](#)

Montana Wetland Assessment Manual Revised

MDT contracted with PBS&J to revise and update the 1999 [Montana Wetland Assessment Method](#). MWAM was primarily designed to address highway and other linear projects, however MWAM can be applied to other projects including mitigation projects. This method is intended to evaluate wetland functions and values and not delineate wetland boundaries.

National Wetlands Newsletter Examines Compensatory Mitigation Rule

Last spring, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued revised regulations governing compensatory mitigation for authorized impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. These regulations, which went into effect in June, are intended to improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation to replace lost aquatic resource functions and area, expand public participation in compensatory mitigation decision making, and increase the efficiency and predictability of the mitigation project review process. [More...](#)

For more [Montana Water News](#), July 30, 2008, published by the Montana Water Center